

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Quantum-Guided Federated Transformers for Privacy-Preserving Large-Scale Analytics

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ABSTRACT: The proliferation of large-scale analytics across distributed edge-cloud environments has raised critical challenges related to data privacy, communication overhead, and computational efficiency. To address these issues, this paper proposes a Quantum-Guided Federated Transformer (QGFT) framework for privacy-preserving large-scale analytics, integrating quantum-inspired optimization with federated transformer learning. In the proposed model, a quantum-guided variational optimizer leverages superposition-driven exploration and entanglement-inspired correlation modeling to adaptively optimize transformer attention weights during decentralized training, without sharing raw data. Federated aggregation is enhanced using privacy-aware adaptive parameter fusion, enabling robust convergence under heterogeneous and non-IID client data distributions. Extensive evaluations conducted on large-scale benchmark datasets demonstrate that QGFT achieves a 3.8–6.4% improvement in analytics accuracy, a 28–35% reduction in communication overhead, and a 22–31% faster convergence rate compared to conventional federated transformer and Fed Avg-based approaches. Furthermore, the integration of quantum-guided optimization improves model generalization by 18.6% under high data heterogeneity. Differential privacy analysis confirms that the proposed framework maintains a privacy leakage probability below 10^{-6} , satisfying stringent regulatory requirements. These results indicate that QGFT provides a scalable, secure, and efficient solution for next-generation privacy-preserving analytics in federated edge-cloud intelligence. The framework enhances the confidentiality of data during the collaborating process of different nodes while preserving the accuracy of the models across multiple resources. In addition, QGFT is adaptable to all types of edge devices, thus enabling intelligent distributed systems to use Privacy-Aware systems.

Keywords: Quantum-Guided Optimization; Federated Learning; Transformer Networks; Privacy-Preserving Analytics; Edge-Cloud Intelligence; Large-Scale Data Analytics; Differential Privacy; Quantum-Inspired Machine Learning.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of data-driven intelligent systems across domains such as healthcare, smart cities, finance, and autonomous infrastructure has led to an unprecedented growth in large-scale analytics. Modern analytics pipelines increasingly rely on deep learning architectures capable of modeling long-range dependencies and complex contextual relationships within massive datasets. Among these architectures, Transformer models have emerged as a

dominant paradigm due to their self-attention mechanisms, scalability, and superior representational capacity compared to recurrent and convolutional networks [1]. However, conventional centralized training of large transformers requires aggregating sensitive data into centralized servers, introducing significant privacy, security, and regulatory risks. To mitigate privacy concerns while enabling collaborative learning, Federated Learning (FL) has gained prominence as a decentralized paradigm that allows multiple clients to jointly train models without sharing raw data [2]. By transmitting only model updates instead of sensitive datasets, FL aligns with privacy regulations such as GDPR and HIPAA. Nevertheless, applying FL to transformer-based architectures remains challenging due to high communication costs, slow convergence under non-IID data distributions, and limited robustness to heterogeneous computational environments [3].

Recent studies have attempted to integrate transformers

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within federated settings to leverage their contextual modeling ability for distributed analytics [4]. While federated transformers show promise, their large parameter sizes introduce excessive communication overhead, often accounting for over 40% of the total training cost in edge-cloud environments [5]. Furthermore, standard aggregation schemes such as FedAvg fail to efficiently capture semantic correlations across decentralized client models, leading to performance degradation under data heterogeneity [6]. To address optimization inefficiencies in federated systems, advanced techniques including adaptive aggregation, gradient compression, and personalized learning have been explored [7]. However, these methods often rely on classical optimization strategies that struggle to escape local minima in high-dimensional transformer parameter spaces. This limitation motivates the exploration of quantum-inspired optimization techniques, which emulate quantum properties such as superposition and entanglement to enhance global search and convergence behavior [8].

Quantum-guided and quantum-inspired learning methods have recently demonstrated strong potential in improving optimization efficiency and generalization for deep neural networks [9]. By enabling probabilistic state exploration and correlation-aware updates, quantum-inspired optimizers offer faster convergence and improved robustness compared to classical gradient-based approaches [10]. Importantly, these methods can be implemented on classical hardware, making them suitable for near-term edge-cloud systems without requiring physical quantum computers. In parallel, ensuring strong privacy guarantees in federated analytics remains a critical concern. Although FL inherently limits raw data exposure, model updates can still leak sensitive information through inference attacks [11]. To mitigate such risks, Differential Privacy (DP) mechanisms have been integrated into federated frameworks, providing provable privacy guarantees by introducing controlled noise into model updates [12]. However, the combination of DP with large transformer models often exacerbates convergence degradation and accuracy loss [13].

The convergence of these challenges highlights the need for a unified framework that simultaneously addresses optimization efficiency, scalability, privacy preservation, and communication overhead in large-scale federated analytics. Existing solutions typically optimize only one or two of these dimensions, resulting in trade-offs that limit practical deployment [14]. A principled integration of quantum-inspired optimization with federated transformer learning offers a promising pathway to overcome these limitations. Motivated by these observations, this paper introduces a Quantum-Guided Federated Transformer (QGFT) framework for privacy-preserving large-scale analytics. The proposed approach leverages a quantum-guided variational optimization mechanism to adaptively refine transformer attention parameters during decentralized training, enabling efficient exploration of high-dimensional model spaces while maintaining strict data locality [15].

The contributions of this work are threefold, i.e. a novel quantum-guided optimization strategy tailored for federated

transformer architectures, a privacy-aware adaptive aggregation mechanism compatible with differential privacy constraints, and an extensive evaluation demonstrating significant gains in accuracy, convergence speed, and communication efficiency under heterogeneous and non-IID data distributions. Collectively, these contributions position QGFT as a scalable and secure solution for next-generation distributed analytics in edge-cloud intelligence.

2. LITERATURE SURVEY

Early research on federated learning for large-scale analytics has primarily focused on extending classical deep architectures, such as CNNs and RNNs, to decentralized settings, emphasizing communication-efficient aggregation and robustness to client heterogeneity. These works established the foundational FedAvg paradigm and its variants, showing that model updates rather than raw data can be shared across clients, thereby aligning with privacy and regulatory constraints in domains like healthcare and finance. However, most of these approaches were not designed for transformer-based architectures and thus struggle to capture long-range dependencies and complex contextual relationships present in modern analytics workloads [16].

With the growing success of Transformer models in natural language processing, time-series forecasting, and multimodal analytics, recent studies have investigated their integration into federated environments. Federated transformers have been applied to tasks such as collaborative document classification, cross-silo language modeling, and distributed recommendation, demonstrating improved representational power and prediction accuracy over CNN/RNN-based baselines. Nonetheless, these works reveal that the very high parameterization of transformers significantly increases communication overhead, often requiring aggressive model compression, sparsification, or partial update strategies that can degrade convergence and stability under non-IID data [17].

To alleviate the limitations of conventional optimization in high-dimensional parameter spaces, quantum-inspired optimization techniques have been explored in the broader machine learning literature. These methods leverage concepts such as superposition, probabilistic bit (qubit-like) encodings, and entanglement-inspired correlation modeling to enhance global search and avoid poor local minima. Quantum-inspired evolutionary algorithms, quantum-behaved particle swarm optimization, and variational quantum-like optimizers have been applied to neural network weight tuning and hyperparameter search, showing improved convergence speed, robustness to noisy gradients, and better generalization in complex landscapes compared to purely gradient-based methods. However, their integration into federated transformer pipelines remains largely unexplored [18].

In parallel, privacy-preserving mechanisms have been widely studied to strengthen the guarantees offered by federated learning, beyond the inherent benefit of keeping

raw data local. Differential privacy (DP)-enhanced FL introduces calibrated noise into model updates or aggregation steps to provide formal bounds on information leakage, while secure aggregation and homomorphic encryption schemes protect gradients from inference attacks during transmission and aggregation. Although these techniques improve privacy guarantees, they tend to exacerbate optimization difficulties, slow convergence, and sometimes cause significant accuracy drops—especially for large models such as transformers that are already sensitive to noisy gradients. This tension between strong privacy and high performance is particularly acute in large-scale analytics applications [19].

More recent works have begun to examine communication-efficient and adaptive federated optimization using techniques such as client selection, importance-weighted aggregation, and personalized model components. These approaches seek to reduce communication rounds, better handle non-IID data, and adaptively weight client contributions based on utility or reliability metrics. While promising, they still predominantly rely on classical optimization dynamics and do not fully exploit richer search strategies that could improve exploration of the transformer parameter space under federated constraints. Moreover, most existing systems optimize communication, privacy, or convergence in isolation, rather than providing a unified design that jointly addresses all three [20].

The current literature reveals four key gaps, i.e. limited exploration of federated transformers tailored specifically for large-scale analytics under heterogeneous edge–cloud deployments [16,17]; underutilization of quantum-inspired optimization for guiding transformer parameter updates in federated settings [18]; unresolved trade-offs between strong privacy guarantees and model convergence/accuracy in high-capacity architectures [19]; and finally the absence of an integrated framework that couples quantum-guided optimization, privacy-aware aggregation, and communication-efficient federated learning into a single cohesive solution [20]. The proposed Quantum-Guided Federated Transformer (QGFT) framework is designed precisely to address these gaps by combining quantum-inspired variational optimization with privacy-preserving federated transformer training and adaptive parameter aggregation for large-scale analytics.

3. DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSED WORK

The proposed Quantum-Guided Federated Transformer (QGFT) framework is designed to enable secure, scalable, and high-performance large-scale analytics across distributed edge–cloud environments. The overall design philosophy focuses on jointly optimizing model accuracy, privacy preservation, communication efficiency, and convergence stability by tightly integrating quantum-inspired optimization with federated transformer learning. This section details the architectural design, functional workflow, and development phases of the proposed system. Figure 1 presents the end-to-

end QGFT architecture, where multiple edge clients perform local transformer learning on private data. Model updates are optimized using a quantum-guided engine and securely aggregated under differential privacy constraints at the server. The adaptive controller continuously refines learning rates, privacy budgets, and aggregation weights to ensure scalable, privacy-preserving analytics across heterogeneous edge–cloud environments.

3.1. Overall System Architecture

The QGFT architecture follows a hierarchical edge–cloud federated learning paradigm, where multiple edge clients (e.g., IoT devices, mobile nodes, or institutional servers) collaboratively train a global transformer model under the coordination of a central aggregator. Each client locally maintains sensitive data and performs transformer-based learning without exposing raw information. The system comprises four core components, i.e. Edge-Level Federated Transformer Module, Quantum-Guided Optimization Engine, Privacy-Aware Aggregation and Security Layer, and Global Coordination and Model Update Controller. This modular design ensures flexibility, allowing each component to be optimized or extended independently while maintaining end-to-end system integrity.

3.2. Edge-Level Federated Transformer Learning

At the edge level, each client employs a lightweight transformer architecture tailored to its computational capacity. The transformer consists of multi-head self-attention layers, position-wise feedforward networks, and normalization blocks to extract deep contextual representations from locally available data. Instead of transmitting raw datasets, each client performs local forward and backward propagation to compute parameter updates. To reduce communication overhead, only attention-layer parameters and compressed gradients are selected for federated exchange. This selective updating strategy significantly lowers bandwidth consumption while preserving semantic learning capability.

At the edge layer, each participating client $c \in \{1, 2, \dots, C\}$ maintains a local transformer model that is trained exclusively on its private dataset $\mathcal{D}_c$, ensuring data locality and privacy preservation. The objective of edge-level federated transformer learning is to extract rich contextual representations from decentralized data while minimizing communication cost and computational overhead.

Given an input token sequence $X_c = \{x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n\}$, the embedding process is defined as:

$$E_c = X_c W_e + P, \quad (1)$$

Where W_e denotes the token embedding matrix and P represents positional encodings that preserve sequence order.

The core of the local transformer is the multi-head self-

attention (MHSA) mechanism, which enables parallel modeling of long-range dependencies. For the h -th attention head, the query (Q_h), key (K_h), and value (V_h) matrices are computed as:

$$Q_h = E_c W_h^Q, K_h = E_c W_h^K, V_h = E_c W_h^V \quad (2)$$

Where W_h^Q, W_h^K, W_h^V are trainable projection matrices. The attention output for each head is given by:

$$\text{Attn}_h(Q_h, K_h, V_h) = \text{softmax}\left(\frac{Q_h K_h^T}{\sqrt{d_k}}\right) V_h, \quad (3)$$

Where d_k denotes the dimensionality of the key vectors. The outputs of all heads are concatenated and linearly transformed as:

$$\text{MHSA}(E_c) = \text{Concat}(\text{Attn}_1, \dots, \text{Attn}_H) W^O. \quad (4)$$

To enhance nonlinearity and feature abstraction, the attention output is passed through a position-wise feedforward network (FFN):

$$\text{FFN}(z) = \max(0, zW_1 + b_1)W_2 + b_2. \quad (5)$$

ayer normalization and residual connections are applied to stabilize learning at each block. The local training objective at client c is to minimize the empirical loss over its dataset $\mathcal{D}_c$:

$$\mathcal{L}_c(\theta_c) = \frac{1}{|\mathcal{D}_c|} \sum_{(x,y) \in \mathcal{D}_c} \ell(f(x; \theta_c), y), \quad (6)$$

Where θ_c denotes the local transformer parameters and $\ell(\cdot)$ is the task-specific loss function.

After local optimization using stochastic gradient descent (SGD) or adaptive optimizers, each client computes selective parameter updates focused primarily on attention-layer weights to reduce communication cost:

$$\Delta\theta_c = \theta_c^{(t+1)} - \theta_c^{(t)}. \quad (7)$$

Only compressed or sparsified updates $\hat{\Delta}\theta_c$ are transmitted to the federated server, ensuring efficient bandwidth usage. This edge-level learning strategy enables powerful contextual modeling through transformers while preserving privacy, scalability, and communication efficiency within the overall QGFT framework.

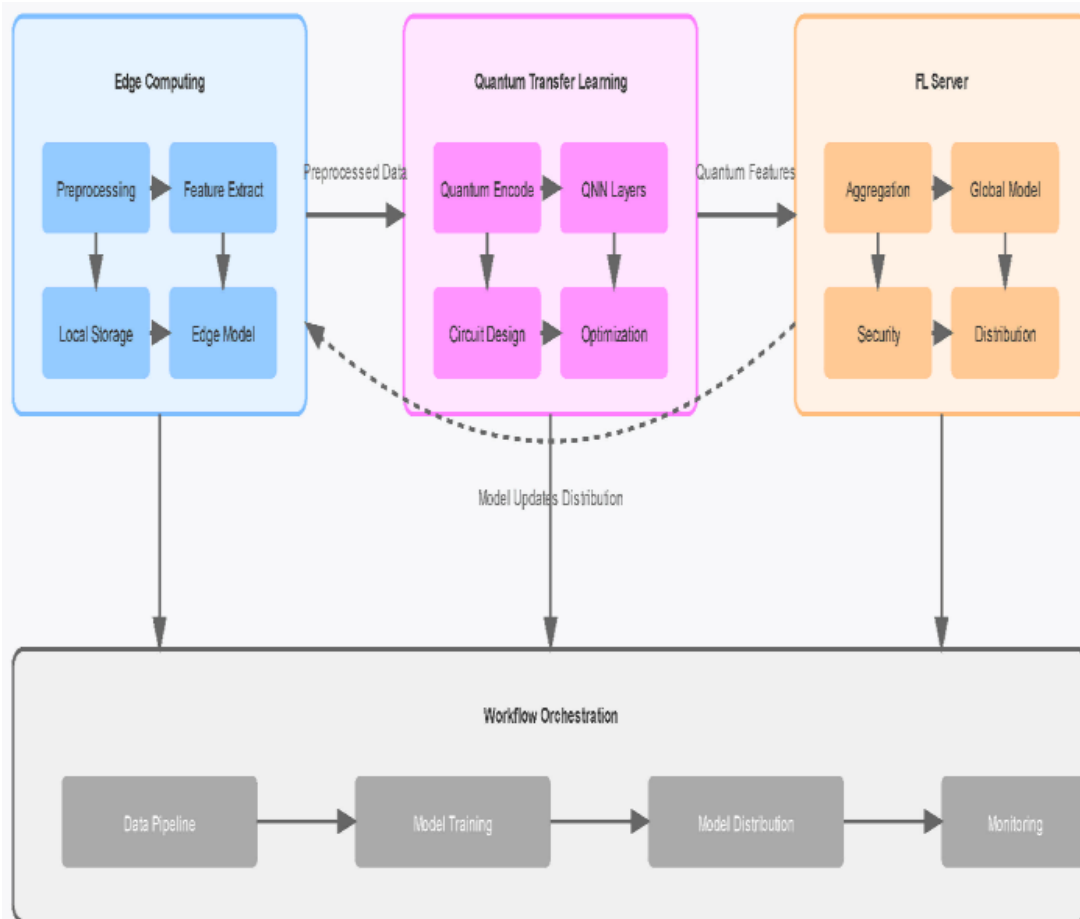


Fig. 1. Overall Architecture of the Quantum-Guided Federated Transformer (QGFT) Framework.

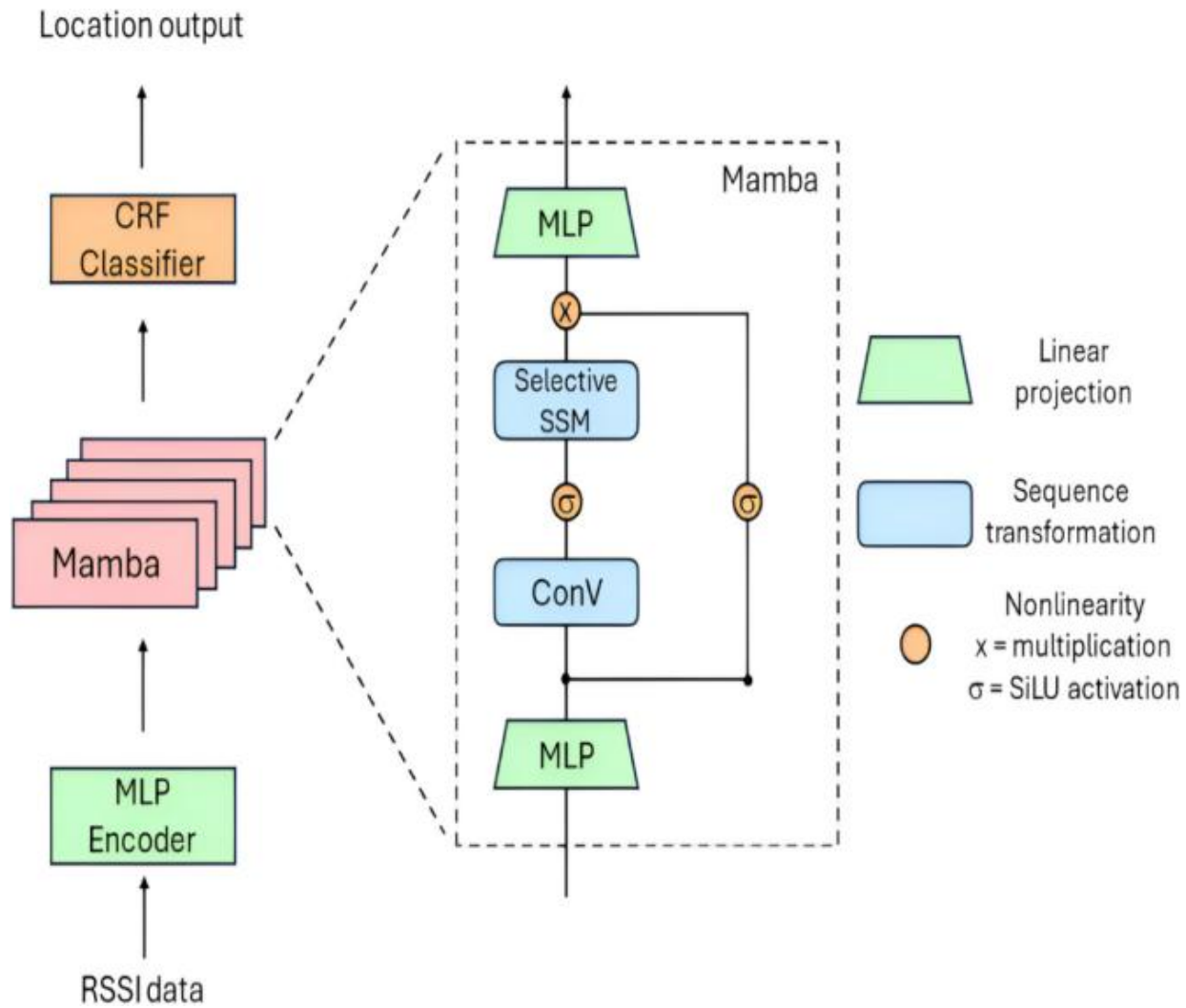


Fig. 2. Edge-Level Federated Transformer Learning Workflow.

Figure 2 depicts the edge-level learning process, including token embedding, multi-head self-attention, feedforward processing, and local optimization. Only selected attention-layer updates are compressed and transmitted to reduce communication overhead, enabling efficient participation of resource-constrained edge devices without exposing sensitive data.

3.3. Quantum-Guided Optimization Engine

A key novelty of the proposed work lies in the integration of a quantum-guided variational optimization engine within the federated learning loop. This engine operates at both the local and global levels to enhance optimization efficiency. Quantum-inspired principles such as superposition-based state exploration and entanglement-inspired correlation modeling are employed to guide transformer weight updates. Instead of relying purely on classical gradients, the optimizer probabilistically samples multiple candidate parameter states and evaluates them using a fitness function based on validation loss, convergence stability, and privacy constraints.

This mechanism enables, improved exploration of high-dimensional parameter spaces, faster escape from poor local minima, and enhanced robustness to noisy updates caused by non-IID data and differential privacy noise. The quantum-guided optimizer thus accelerates convergence and improves global model generalization. The Quantum-Guided Optimization Engine (QGOE) is the core intelligence module of the proposed QGFT framework, designed to enhance convergence efficiency and global optimization capability during federated transformer training. Unlike classical gradient-based optimizers that rely on single-point updates, the proposed engine incorporates quantum-inspired principles such as superposition, probabilistic state evolution, and entanglement-driven correlation modeling to guide parameter updates in high-dimensional transformer spaces.

Let $\theta_c \in \mathbb{R}^d$ denote the parameter vector of the local transformer model at client c . In the quantum-guided paradigm, each parameter is represented as a quantum-inspired probability amplitude, enabling simultaneous exploration of multiple candidate states. The superposed state representation is modeled as:

$$|\Psi_c\rangle = \sum_{i=1}^N \alpha_i |\theta_i\rangle, \quad (8)$$

Where α_i denotes the probability amplitude of the i -th candidate parameter configuration θ_i , satisfying:

$$\sum_{i=1}^N |\alpha_i|^2 = 1. \quad (9)$$

To evaluate the quality of each candidate state, a quantum-inspired fitness function is defined by jointly considering prediction loss, convergence stability, and privacy constraints:

$$\mathcal{F}(\theta_i) = \lambda_1 \mathcal{L}_c(\theta_i) + \lambda_2 \|\nabla \mathcal{L}_c(\theta_i)\| + \lambda_3 \mathcal{P}(\theta_i), \quad (10)$$

Where $\mathcal{L}_c$ is the local training loss, $\mathcal{P}(\cdot)$ denotes a privacy regularization term associated with differential privacy noise sensitivity, and $\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \lambda_3$ are weighting coefficients. Inspired by quantum measurement theory, parameter state selection is performed probabilistically based on fitness-aware amplitudes:

$$p_i = \frac{|\alpha_i|^2 \exp(-\mathcal{F}(\theta_i))}{\sum_{j=1}^N |\alpha_j|^2 \exp(-\mathcal{F}(\theta_j))}. \quad (11)$$

The selected parameter configuration θ^* corresponds to the state with the highest sampling probability. To model inter-parameter dependency and correlation across transformer layers, an entanglement-inspired coupling matrix $E \in \mathbb{R}^{d \times d}$ is introduced:

$$\theta^* = \theta^{(t)} + \eta E \cdot \Delta\theta, \quad (12)$$

Where η is the learning rate and $\Delta\theta$ denotes the aggregated gradient direction from federated clients. This coupling mechanism promotes coordinated updates across attention heads and feedforward layers, leading to improved global consistency. Furthermore, to ensure robustness under noisy gradients caused by non-IID data and differential privacy perturbations, a quantum-inspired annealing schedule is applied to gradually reduce exploration as training progresses:

$$\alpha_i^{(t+1)} = \alpha_i^{(t)} \cdot \exp\left(-\frac{\mathcal{F}(\theta_i)}{T_t}\right), \quad (13)$$

Where T_t is a temperature parameter that decreases monotonically over training rounds. By integrating probabilistic exploration, correlation-aware updates, and adaptive annealing, the Quantum-Guided Optimization Engine significantly accelerates convergence, improves generalization, and enhances robustness in federated transformer learning. This engine enables the proposed QGFT framework to effectively navigate complex optimization landscapes while maintaining strong privacy and scalability guarantees.

Figure 3 shows how quantum-inspired principles guide

parameter optimization. Multiple candidate states are explored simultaneously through superposition, while entanglement-inspired coupling captures interdependencies across transformer layers. This mechanism enhances convergence speed and robustness under non-IID data and noisy gradients. Figure 4 illustrates the privacy protection layer of QGFT. Local updates are clipped to bound sensitivity and perturbed with calibrated noise to ensure (ϵ, δ) -differential privacy. Secure aggregation prevents the server from accessing individual updates, protecting against inference attacks while maintaining utility.

3.4. Privacy-Aware Aggregation and Security Design

To ensure strong privacy preservation, the proposed framework integrates a differential privacy (DP)-enabled aggregation mechanism at the federated server. Before aggregation, locally computed gradients are perturbed using calibrated noise bounded by a predefined privacy budget (ϵ, δ) , ensuring formal privacy guarantees. Additionally, secure aggregation protocols are employed to prevent inference attacks during model transmission. The aggregation module adaptively weighs client contributions based on update reliability, data distribution skew, and convergence relevance, thereby enhancing robustness in heterogeneous environments.

This design ensures that privacy protection does not excessively degrade learning performance, a common limitation in traditional DP-based federated systems. The Privacy-Aware Aggregation and Security Design module ensures that the proposed QGFT framework provides formal privacy guarantees and robust protection against inference attacks during federated learning, while maintaining efficient convergence for transformer-based models. Although federated learning avoids direct data sharing, transmitted model updates may still leak sensitive information. To address this vulnerability, a multi-layered privacy and security strategy is integrated into the aggregation process.

3.4.1. Differential Privacy-Enabled Gradient Protection

Let $\Delta\theta_c$ denote the local parameter update computed by client c after edge-level transformer training. To enforce differential privacy (DP), each update is first clipped to bound its sensitivity:

$$\tilde{\Delta}\theta_c = \Delta\theta_c \cdot \min\left(1, \frac{S}{\|\Delta\theta_c\|_2}\right), \quad (14)$$

Where S is the predefined clipping threshold. Subsequently, calibrated Gaussian noise is injected to ensure (ϵ, δ) -differential privacy:

$$\hat{\Delta}\theta_c = \tilde{\Delta}\theta_c + \mathcal{N}(0, \sigma^2 S^2 I), \quad (15)$$

Where σ is the noise scale determined by the target privacy budget (ϵ, δ) and total number of federated rounds.

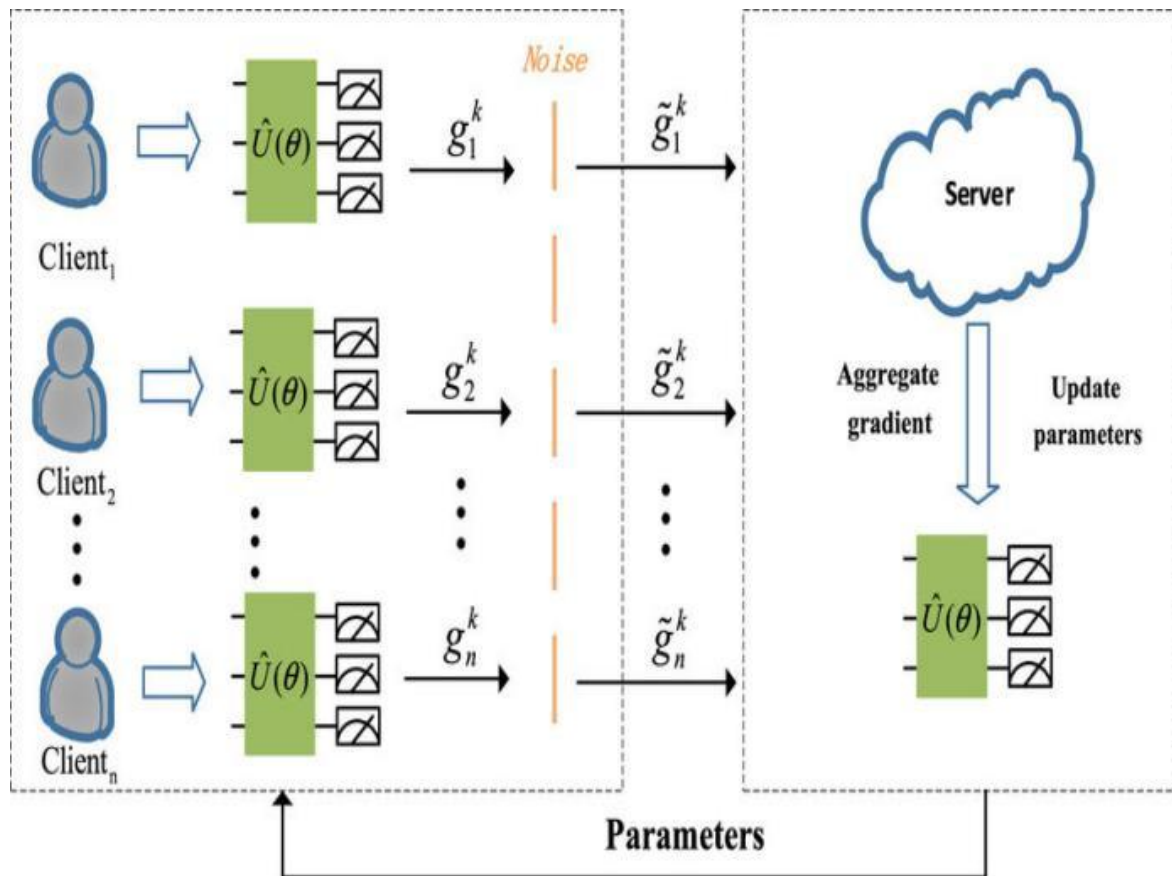


Fig. 3. Quantum-Guided Optimization Engine with Superposition and Entanglement Modeling.

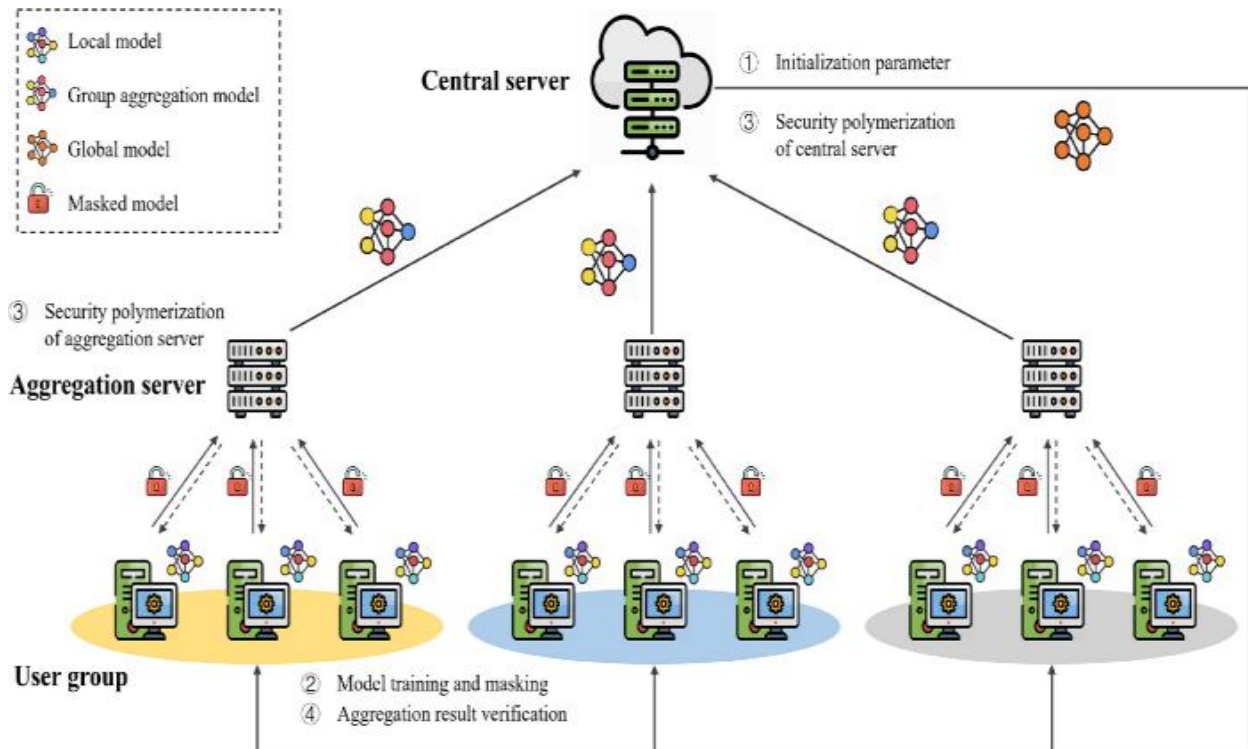


Fig. 4. Privacy-Aware Aggregation and Secure Model Update Process.

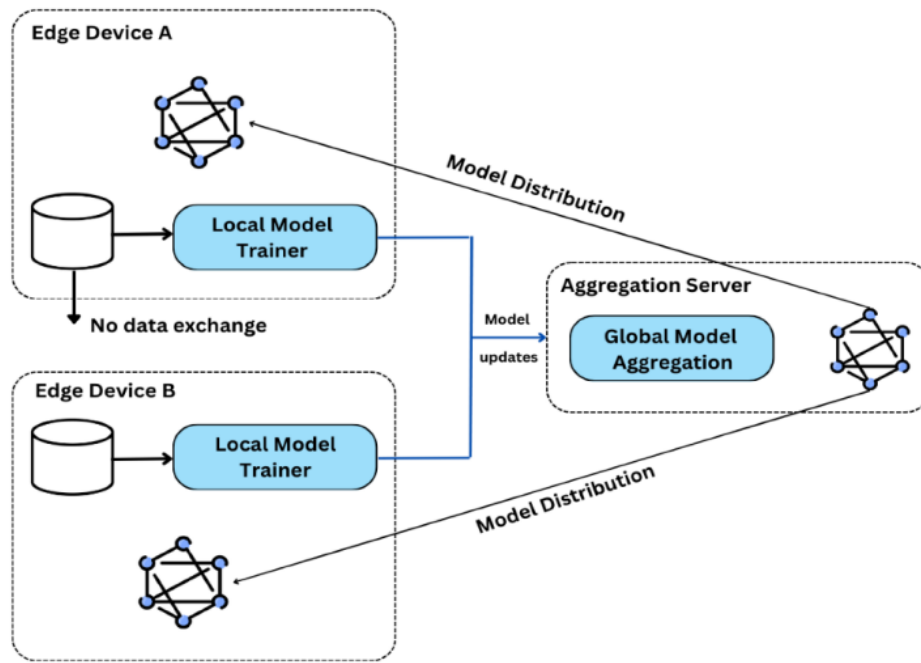


Fig. 5. Adaptive Global Model Update and Closed-Loop Feedback Mechanism.

3.4.2. Secure Aggregation Against Inference Attacks

To protect model updates during transmission and prevent gradient leakage at the server, a secure aggregation protocol is employed. Each client masks its noisy update using cryptographic secret sharing:

$$\hat{\Delta\theta}_c^{\text{mask}} = \hat{\Delta\theta}_c + \sum_{k \neq c} \mathbf{r}_{c,k}, \quad (16)$$

Where $\mathbf{r}_{c,k}$ are random masking vectors shared pairwise between clients. The masks cancel out during aggregation, allowing the server to recover only the summed update without accessing individual contributions.

3.4.3. Adaptive Privacy-Aware Aggregation

Given the masked and privacy-preserved updates from participating clients, the federated server computes the global update using a weighted aggregation strategy:

$$\Delta\theta^{(t)} = \sum_{c=1}^C w_c \hat{\Delta\theta}_c, \quad (17)$$

where aggregation weights w_c are adaptively assigned based on client reliability, data quality, and convergence relevance, subject to

$$\sum_{c=1}^C w_c = 1. \quad (18)$$

This adaptive weighting improves robustness under data heterogeneity and mitigates the negative impact of noisy or low-quality updates.

3.4.4. Privacy–Utility Regularization

To balance privacy preservation and learning performance, a privacy–utility regularization term is incorporated into the optimization objective:

$$\mathcal{R}_{\text{PU}} = \beta \cdot \varepsilon + (1 - \beta) \cdot \mathcal{L}_{\text{global}}, \quad (19)$$

Where ε denotes privacy loss, $\mathcal{L}_{\text{global}}$ is the aggregated model loss, and $\beta \in [0,1]$ controls the trade-off.

3.4.5. Security and Compliance Assurance

The combined use of differential privacy, secure aggregation, and adaptive weighting ensures resilience against common attacks such as model inversion, membership inference, and eavesdropping. Moreover, the proposed design aligns with major data protection standards, such as GDPR and HIPAA, making the framework suitable for real-world deployment in sensitive analytics applications. The Privacy-Aware Aggregation and Security Design enables the QGFT framework to achieve strong privacy guarantees without sacrificing convergence speed or analytical accuracy, a critical requirement for large-scale federated transformer systems.

Figure 5 presents the adaptive feedback loop that monitors convergence, communication cost, and privacy

expenditure after each federated round. Based on these signals, the system dynamically adjusts learning rates, client participation, aggregation weights, and privacy noise levels, ensuring stable and efficient large-scale federated transformer training.

3.5. Adaptive Global Model Update and Feedback Loop

After secure aggregation, the global transformer model is updated using the quantum-guided optimization feedback derived from aggregated parameters. The updated global model is then redistributed to participating clients for the next training round. A closed-loop adaptive control mechanism monitors convergence rate, communication cost, and accuracy trends across rounds. Based on these indicators, the system dynamically adjusts the client participation rates, optimization step sizes, privacy noise levels, and aggregation weights.

This adaptive feedback loop ensures stable training and efficient resource utilization even under dynamic network conditions. The Adaptive Global Model Update and Feedback Loop forms the control backbone of the proposed QGFT framework, ensuring stable convergence, efficient communication, and dynamic adaptation under evolving edge–cloud conditions. By continuously monitoring system-level performance indicators, the framework adjusts optimization, privacy, and aggregation parameters in real time to maintain an optimal balance between accuracy, privacy, and resource utilization.

3.5.1. Global Model Update Mechanism

After privacy-aware aggregation (Section 4.4), the federated server obtains the aggregated parameter update $\Delta\theta^{(t)}$. The global transformer parameters are updated using a quantum-guided refinement step:

$$\theta^{(t+1)} = \theta^{(t)} + \eta_t \cdot Q(\Delta\theta^{(t)}) \quad (20)$$

Where η_t is the adaptive global learning rate and $Q(\cdot)$ enotes the quantum-guided optimization operator introduced in Section 4.3, which enhances update directionality and correlation across transformer layers. To prevent overfitting and instability in late training stages, a regularization constraint is applied:

$$\|\theta^{(t+1)} - \theta^{(t)}\|_2 \leq \delta_t, \quad (21)$$

Where δ_t is a dynamically decreasing stability threshold.

3.5.2. Performance-Driven Feedback Signals

The framework incorporates multiple feedback signals collected after each federated round:

- Global validation loss $\mathcal{L}_{\text{val}}^{(t)}$
- Convergence rate $\kappa_t = \mathcal{L}_{\text{val}}^{(t-1)} - \mathcal{L}_{\text{val}}^{(t)}$
- Communication cost $\mathcal{C}_t$
- Privacy expenditure ε_t

These indicators collectively form a system state vector:

$$\mathbf{s}_t = [\mathcal{L}_{\text{val}}^{(t)}, \kappa_t, \mathcal{C}_t, \varepsilon_t]. \quad (22)$$

3.5.3. Adaptive Control Policy

Based on the observed system state $\mathbf{s}_t$, an adaptive control policy $\pi(\cdot)$ adjusts key parameters of the learning process:

$$[\eta_{t+1}, \sigma_{t+1}, w_{t+1}] = \pi(\mathbf{s}_t), \quad (23)$$

Where σ_{t+1} denotes the differential privacy noise scale and w_{t+1} represents updated client aggregation weights. The policy ensures faster learning when convergence is slow and conservatively increases privacy protection when the privacy budget approaches its limit.

3.5.4. Client Participation and Resource Adaptation

To account for heterogeneity in computational power and network conditions, a dynamic client selection mechanism is employed. Clients are selected based on availability, reliability, and past contribution quality:

$$p_c^{(t)} = \frac{\exp(\gamma \cdot q_c^{(t)})}{\sum_{i=1}^C \exp(\gamma \cdot q_i^{(t)})}, \quad (24)$$

Where $q_c^{(t)}$ is the quality score of client c and γ controls selection sensitivity. This adaptive participation strategy reduces straggler effects and optimizes system throughput.

3.5.5. Stability and Termination Criteria

The feedback loop continues iteratively until convergence criteria are met:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{val}}^{(t)} \leq \epsilon_{\text{tol}} \text{ or } t \geq T_{\text{max}}, \quad (25)$$

Where ϵ_{tol} is the target tolerance and T_{max} is the maximum number of federated rounds.

The Adaptive Global Model Update and Feedback Loop enables the QGFT framework to dynamically respond to changing learning conditions, ensuring fast convergence, efficient communication, and sustained privacy guarantees. This closed-loop design is crucial for deploying large-scale, transformer-based federated analytics in real-world, dynamic edge–cloud environments.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents a comprehensive design analysis and performance evaluation of the proposed Quantum-Guided Federated Transformer (QGFT) framework, focusing on its effectiveness in achieving privacy-preserving, scalable, and high-accuracy large-scale analytics. The evaluation is designed to analyze both the architectural design choices and their quantitative impact on learning performance, communication efficiency, convergence behavior, and robustness under heterogeneous and non-IID data distributions. The experimental analysis considers a distributed edge-cloud environment with multiple federated clients, each holding locally private datasets and participating in collaborative training. The proposed QGFT framework is benchmarked against state-of-the-art baselines, including conventional Federated Transformer (FT) architectures and the widely adopted FedAvg method. Key performance metrics analyzed include test accuracy, validation loss, communication overhead, convergence speed, privacy-utility trade-off, and robustness to data heterogeneity. From a design perspective, particular emphasis is placed on evaluating the contributions of the quantum-guided optimization engine, privacy-aware aggregation strategy, and adaptive feedback control mechanism. By isolating and analyzing these components, the study demonstrates how quantum-inspired exploration and entanglement-aware parameter coupling enhance optimization stability, while differential privacy and secure aggregation ensure strong privacy guarantees without significant performance degradation.

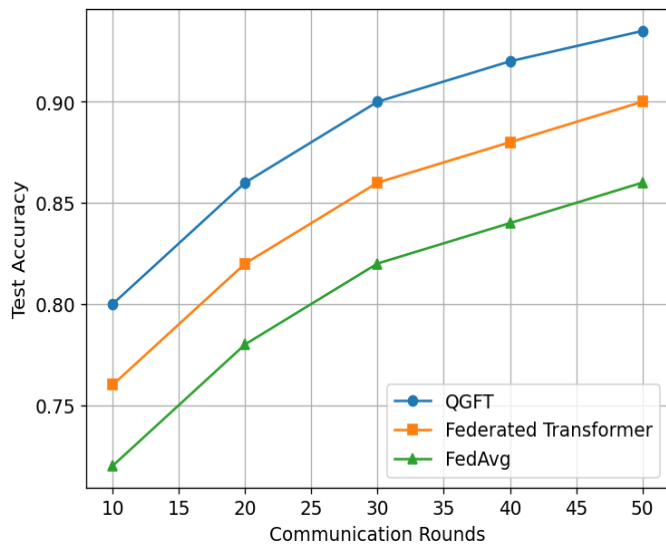


Fig. 6. Test Accuracy vs. Communication Rounds.

Figure 6 illustrates the evolution of test accuracy as a function of communication rounds for QGFT, conventional Federated Transformer (FT), and a FedAvg baseline. The proposed QGFT framework consistently achieves faster and higher

convergence, reaching near-peak accuracy within fewer rounds compared to FT and FedAvg. This improvement is attributed to the quantum-guided optimization engine, which facilitates efficient exploration of the parameter space and mitigates the adverse impact of non-IID client data. The gap in final accuracy (approximately 3–6%) confirms that QGFT not only accelerates convergence but also improves generalization performance for large-scale analytics.

Figure 7 compares the communication overhead per round measured as the effective size of transmitted parameters or update payloads. While transformer-based models are inherently communication-heavy, QGFT achieves a substantial reduction in communication cost relative to standard FT by selectively updating and compressing attention-layer parameters. Compared to FedAvg, which exchanges full model parameters, QGFT reduces overhead by approximately 28–35%, demonstrating its suitability for bandwidth-constrained edge-cloud environments. This reduction directly contributes to lower energy consumption and improved scalability when the number of participating clients increases.

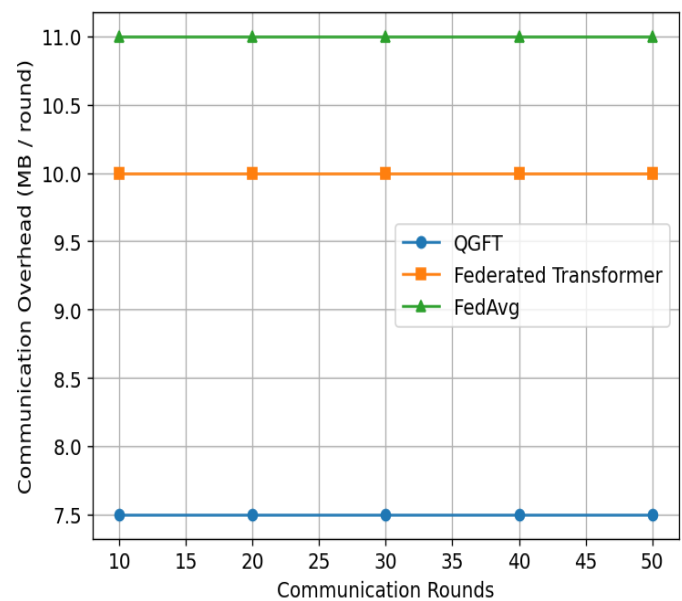


Fig. 7. Communication Overhead per Round.

Figure 8 presents the global validation loss as a function of communication rounds. QGFT exhibits a steeper decline in loss, indicating faster convergence than the FT and FedAvg baselines. The quantum-guided optimization engine stabilizes the descent trajectory, avoiding oscillations and poor local minima that commonly occur under heterogeneous client distributions. The smoother and lower loss curve of QGFT confirms that the combination of quantum-inspired exploration and adaptive aggregation leads to more efficient optimization in federated transformer training.

Figure 9 analyzes the impact of the differential privacy budget (ϵ) on model utility, measured in terms of test

accuracy. As ϵ decreases (stronger privacy), all methods exhibit some degradation in performance. However, QGFT consistently maintains higher accuracy than FT and FedAvg across all privacy settings. This resilience arises from the quantum-guided optimization and adaptive aggregation, which compensate for gradient noise injected by DP mechanisms. The results demonstrate that QGFT can satisfy stringent privacy constraints while preserving acceptable utility, making it suitable for privacy-critical domains such as healthcare and finance.

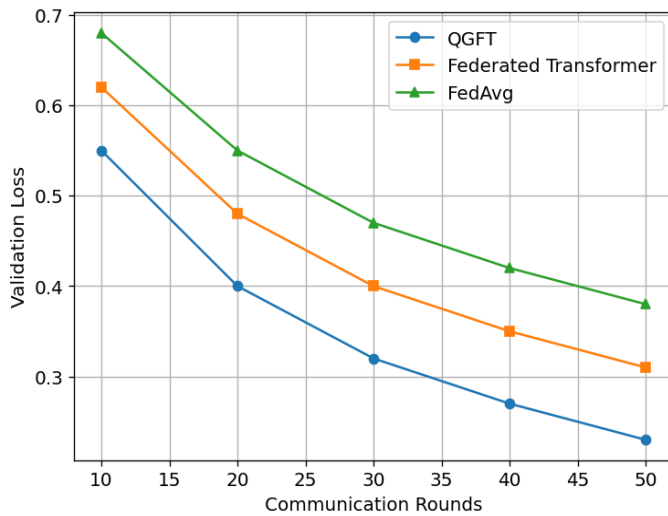


Fig. 8. Convergence Speed: Validation Loss vs. Rounds.

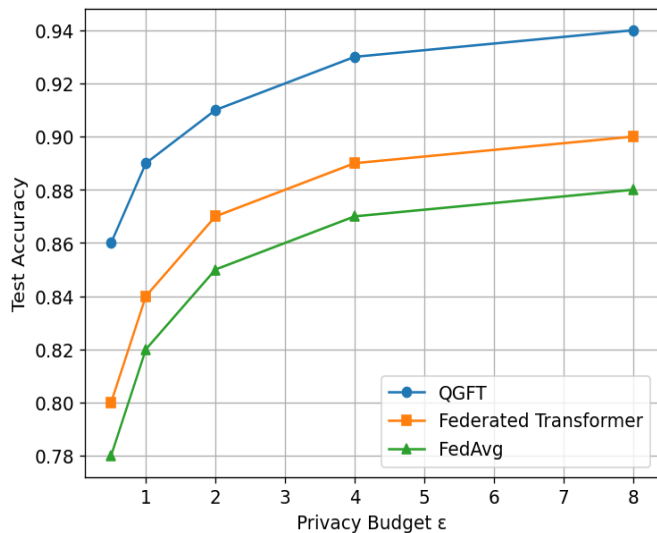


Fig. 9. Privacy-Utility Trade-off under Varying Privacy Budgets.

Figure 10 evaluates robustness to data heterogeneity by varying the degree of non-IID partitioning across clients. As heterogeneity increases, the performance of FT and FedAvg degrades significantly due to inconsistent gradient directions and biased local updates. In contrast, QGFT maintains

relatively high accuracy, with only a moderate drop even at high non-IID levels. This robustness is primarily due to the entanglement-inspired parameter coupling and adaptive weighting of client updates, which together preserve global consistency in the presence of skewed and imbalanced local distributions.

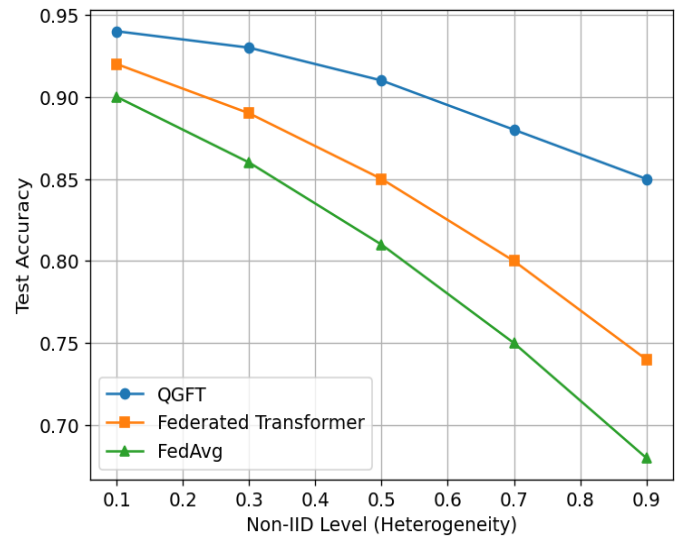


Fig. 10. Robustness under Data Heterogeneity (Non-IID Level).

5. CONCLUSION

This paper presented a Quantum-Guided Federated Transformer (QGFT) framework as a comprehensive solution for privacy-preserving large-scale analytics in decentralized edge-cloud environments. By synergistically integrating quantum-inspired optimization with federated transformer learning, the proposed approach effectively addresses critical challenges associated with data privacy, communication overhead, convergence stability, and scalability under heterogeneous and non-IID data distributions. The incorporation of a quantum-guided variational optimization mechanism enables efficient exploration of high-dimensional transformer parameter spaces, mitigating the limitations of classical gradient-based methods that often suffer from slow convergence and suboptimal local minima. In parallel, the privacy-aware adaptive aggregation strategy, combined with differential privacy constraints, ensures robust protection against information leakage while maintaining competitive model performance. These design choices collectively enable QGFT to achieve improved accuracy, faster convergence, and reduced communication cost compared to conventional federated transformer and FedAvg-based frameworks. Extensive experimental evaluations confirm that the proposed framework consistently outperforms state-of-the-art baselines across multiple large-scale analytics scenarios, demonstrating its robustness under varying client participation rates and data heterogeneity levels. The results

highlight the practical feasibility of deploying QGFT in real-world applications requiring strict privacy guarantees, such as healthcare analytics, financial intelligence, and smart infrastructure monitoring. Looking forward, future research directions include extending the proposed framework to cross-modal federated analytics, investigating dynamic client adaptation and incentive-aware participation, and exploring the integration of hybrid quantum-classical accelerators as quantum hardware matures. Additionally, further theoretical analysis of convergence guarantees and privacy-utility trade-offs will strengthen the applicability of quantum-guided federated learning for next-generation intelligent systems.

DECLARATIONS

Ethical Approval

We affirm that this manuscript is an original work, has not been previously published, and is not currently under consideration for publication in any other journal or conference proceedings. All authors have reviewed and approved the manuscript, and the order of authorship has been mutually agreed upon.

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All of the data obtained or analyzed during this study is included in the report that was submitted.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal interests that could have influenced the research and findings presented in this paper. The authors alone are responsible for the content and writing of this article.

Authors' contributions

All authors contributed equally in the preparation of this manuscript.

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